

R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 017 374

RC 002 315

RURAL RECREATION. NEW OPPORTUNITIES ON PRIVATE LAND.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, WASHINGTON, D.C.

REPORT NUMBER MP-930

PUB DATE JUN 63

EDRS PRICE MF-\$0.25 HC-\$1.04 24P.

DESCRIPTORS- CAMPING, *OUTDOOR EDUCATION, *RECREATION,
*RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, *RURAL AREAS, RURAL ENVIRONMENT,
OUTDOOR RECREATION RESOURCES REV. COMM.,

ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF ALL AMERICANS PARTICIPATED IN SOME FORM OF OUTDOOR RECREATION IN THE SUMMER OF 1960, AND THE TOTAL NUMBER IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE THREEFOLD BY THE TURN OF THE CENTURY. A LIST OF THE MOST POPULAR OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES INCLUDES DRIVING, WALKING, GAMES, SWIMMING, SIGHTSEEING, BICYCLING, FISHING, HIKING, BOATING, AND PICNICING. ALTHOUGH A FEW RECREATIONAL RESOURCES ARE WITHIN THE SUBURBS, THE MAJORITY ARE IN THE MORE RURAL AREAS OF THE NATION. MANY SUCH RESOURCES ARE ON PRIVATE LAND--PONDS, ACCESSES TO STREAMS, TOBOGGAN SLOPES, ICE SKATING ARENAS, PICNIC ACCOMMODATIONS, CAMPING FACILITIES, AND HUNTING AREAS. A SECTION IS INCLUDED ON HOW THE USDA CAN HELP TO ESTABLISH PRIVATE RECREATIONAL SITES THROUGH TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, EDUCATION, RESEARCH, AND RURAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT. THIS BOOKLET IS ALSO AVAILABLE FOR \$0.20 FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT OF DOCUMENTS, U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE, WASHINGTON, D.C. 20402. (CL)

Miscellaneous Publication No. 930
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

return to the open spaces

A HUNDRED MILLION AMERICANS will take to the road this year. Perhaps you will be one of them. Where will you go? What will you be seeking?

Do you have a new-found interest in camping—or boating, or skiing, or other outdoor activity? It's all part of a great national surge to the open spaces. Increasing throngs of urban dwellers are turning naturally to public parks, forests, and beaches to find relief from confinement and to enjoy outdoor activity.

The Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission has said that:

About 90 percent of all Americans participated in some form of outdoor recreation in the summer of 1960. In total, they participated in one activity or another on 4.4 billion separate occasions. It is anticipated that by 1976 the total will be 6.9 billion, and by the year 2000 it will be 12.4 billion—a threefold increase by the turn of the century.

So great is the surge to the outdoors that public facilities near population centers can no longer accommodate all those who want to camp, picnic, swim, and the like. On an average weekend at the peak season, about a fourth of the public picnic areas turn away visitors.

Current pressures have brought plans for expansion of recreation facilities in National, State, and local park and forest areas. In the next 5 years, swimming capacity is scheduled to be increased by 70 percent, campgrounds by 55 percent, picnic areas by 37 percent, and winter sports areas by 36 percent.

But much public land that can be used for recreation is in remote areas. The Northeast, where a fourth of the people live, has only 4 percent of the public recreation acreage of the U.S. mainland. In contrast, the West, where only 15 percent of the people live, has 72 percent.

A study by the U.S. Department of Agriculture of outdoor recreation facilities on farms and ranches shows that the greatest potential for meeting future needs is on the Nation's private rural land. This is to be expected since nearly three-fourths of the U.S. mainland is in private ownership.

The ORRRC observed: "Most of this is in farms, forests, and rangelands which provide many different kinds of recreation opportunities, notably hunting, fishing, hiking, picnicking, camping, and sightseeing." This private rural land is doubly important because it includes most of the open space within easy driving distance of city people.

The study also revealed that more and more private landowners are developing their recreation resources and offering them to the public for a fee. Recent actions of the Congress are aimed at encouraging this development.

It is the purpose of this booklet to call to your attention facilities already available—and others to come—where you can make private arrangements and be assured of ample space to enjoy your outdoor activity. It is an invitation to go shopping for your vacation or weekend pleasure trip on the private land of rural America.



0050



the simple things

Surprisingly, the President's Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission found that most Americans are easy to satisfy. We settle for simple activities, so long as we can be out under the sky, in the sun and fresh air.

Driving and walking for pleasure are the two most popular activities for fun in the outdoors. Playing games and swimming are next; then sightseeing, bicycling, fishing, going to outdoor sporting events, and picnicking.

The more active and hardy go in for skiing, mountain climbing, skindiving, and sailing.

A few seek out far places and hike, canoe, or ride horseback where they can see and live with the land as it was. Most of us content ourselves with reading about these experiences.



room to enjoy

Almost within the suburbs and far out to the remotest mountains, a growing number of enterprising landowners are offering their recreation resources and services at reasonable cost to a user. For a small fee, he can have exclusive use of a tent site or picnic area; he can hunt, swim, fish; he can have a horse to ride; or he can live a week or a month in the quiet countryside and share in the life of a farm or ranch. As people show they are willing to pay for the recreation that farms and ranches have to offer, or can provide, farmers and ranchers can be depended on to make it available on acceptable terms.

a word to parents

Outdoor life is a fundamental part of the American tradition.

But today nine out of ten of us live in towns and cities. Our children grow up, for the most part, with little direct contact with wild creatures, native plants, and the elements. They need opportunities to learn of man's relationship to his total environment, as did our pioneer forefathers.

Families can gain by sharing these experiences together. There is no better place than on America's farms and ranches, in her woods and waters.

Such experiences develop appreciation of natural resources and the need for their wise use and conservation. They build understanding of life itself.

A summer job on a farm or ranch, or a vacation or weekend in rural surroundings, is a good way for children to share in these experiences.





opportunities close to home

Too often the urge to get outdoors withers at the prospect of hours on a crowded highway. For most of us the marvels of the Western mountains, the North woods, or the distant ocean beaches must be reserved for the occasional major vacation trip.

But we don't have to wait months to enjoy outdoor recreation. The rural areas near cities and towns offer many opportunities for you, the city dweller, to enjoy outdoor fun close to home. Here are some of the possibilities:

Away From the City

Country Driving—choice farm scenes, woods, streams, plant and animal life for the seeking and a good chance to find special spots where you can enjoy private recreation privileges for a fee.

Hiking, Nature Study, Photography—numerous opportunities along country roads and roadsides; paid use of farm recreation facilities gains admittance to even more varied and select habitats.

Horseback Riding, Hayrides—main attractions of many vacation farms and dude ranches; some farm recreation centers sponsor hayrides and riding clubs.

Picnicking—private uncrowded picnic accommodations for reasonable fees, often associated with other recreation facilities.

Camping—private campgrounds convenient for weekend outings, usually with good control of crowding.

Water Sports

Swimming, Boating—in farm and ranch ponds and watershed lakes; some with boat docks and beaches, bathhouses, and lifeguards. Charges depend on facilities.

Water Skiing—as well as other water sports on the large lakes, including many in watershed-protection projects.

Fishing—fishing privileges for a fee in farm ponds, watershed lakes, and the natural streams and lakes on private property; patronage usually regulated to avoid overcrowding.

Winter Sports

Skiing, Tobogganing—charges vary according to facilities—some elaborate; some little more than open slopes on private rural land.

Ice Skating, Ice Fishing—on farm and ranch ponds and watershed-project lakes; summer campgrounds and such with natural streams or lakes may offer winter sports as well.

Hunting

Hunting Privileges—for a fee on farms and ranches or on adjoining farms.

Shooting Preserves—guaranteed shooting of pen-raised game, usually for longer seasons than permitted for wild game.

how to find them

How do you find places to vacation on a farm, hike, go horseback riding, picnic, camp, hunt, fish or swim, and the like?

Maybe you have already enjoyed outdoor recreation on a farm. Ask your hosts about other kinds of recreation nearby. Or, ask friends you know have vacationed on a farm. The local offices of the Cooperative State Extension Service and the U.S. Soil Conservation Service can advise you. Their telephone numbers are listed under U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Here are other ways to find the places that offer rural recreation:

- Signs advertising outdoor recreation
- Local game officers
- Travel bureaus
- Auto clubs
- Local chambers of commerce
- Tourist agencies
- Outdoor recreation organizations
- Sporting goods stores
- Gas stations
- Motels
- Family and outdoor magazines
- Special-interest publications
- Travel sections of newspaper
- Classified ads in newspapers and magazines
- Yellow pages of the telephone directory
- Literature of State parks and resource agencies



meet your hosts

Outdoor recreation on private land differs from that on public parks, seashores, and forests in that you have an individual relationship and responsibility to the landowner.

On public land, you are, in fact, co-owner of the property. As a citizen, you are entitled to enjoy the privileges offered, so long as you use them so that others may enjoy them too.

When you use private land, however, you owe the owner the consideration and respect due any host.

When you pay a fee for recreation privileges or services, you make a bargain with the landowner. You are entitled to the benefits contracted for but you should treat your host and his land with respect. Many farmers are reluctant to share the pleasures of their land with city people because of unpleasant experiences in the past. Even when enjoying the open pleasures of the rural countryside—sightseeing from a car or stopping for a roadside stroll—respect the interests of those who live on the land.



vacation farms . . .

The peace and charm of country life, with all the pleasure of wholesome outdoor activity can be yours—for a week, a month, or all summer—on a vacation farm.

A growing number of country people, including many *bona fide* farmers, are opening their homes to paying guests who want to get away from the life of the city. In rural America, there is an unending variety, and reliable hosts are careful to provide for the safety and health of their guests.

Children and young people, especially, find pleasure and benefit from helping with farm chores, being around domestic and wild animals, and working and playing in the sun and fresh air. Others choose simply to enjoy good home cooking and the quiet leisure of a stay in the country.





and ranches

The excitement and interest of ranch life can be shared as a guest on a wide variety of ranches in the West.

Many actual "working" ranches have an extra bedroom or two, or a detached cabin, where a family or a few guests can live comfortably while they enjoy a vacation in the wide open spaces. Participation in ranch work is optional, but there are horses to ride and opportunity to observe cowboys at work and the West under natural conditions.

At the other extreme are elaborate dude ranches which offer a variety of recreation activities while they cater to the interest in "cowboy living."



A growing number of "dude" ranches in the East feature similar activity for their guests.

Many ranches are so located that their guests can enjoy the beauty of choice public recreation areas too.



camps and . . .

Campgrounds on private land are helping to relieve the crush on public sites in parks and forests. They provide stopping places for travelers along the long stretches of highway between distant vacation spots.

For a modest fee you can rent an individual tent site, much as you would a motel room. Basic facilities usually include table and fire-place for each tent site and a central water supply, washroom, and toilet. Plenty of room for quiet enjoyment of the outdoors is a feature of most private campgrounds.

Some private campgrounds are excellent places for extended vacations. Some are near good fishing water, hunting grounds, and other public or private outdoor recreation opportunities.



picnic grounds

Picnic grounds on farms and ranches and on private land adjacent to lakes and streams offer opportunities for pleasant outings in many areas not served by public facilities.

Private accommodations are usually offered for a small daily fee per person or per car. They often include privileges for fishing, swimming, boating, hunting, horseback riding, or the use of various kinds of sports or amusement facilities.

Spacious surroundings contribute to the enjoyment of group outings on farm picnic grounds. Some operators even show their young customers how to handle unfamiliar outdoor experiences (cleaning the fish they catch, for example).





Farmers and ranchers in the United States have built more than a million ponds and are building new ones at the rate of 60,000 a year. These new farm ponds and the hundreds of small lakes and reservoirs being built throughout the country are bringing opportunities for water sports to areas that never had them before.

Even where natural water abounds, private ponds and lakes provide less crowded space for swimmers, boaters, and water skiers.

Many reservoirs and lakes in small water-

swimming
and
boating



shed projects have boat docks and related facilities for rent. Many private lakes have fine bathing beaches and bathhouses. On the other hand, swimming in farm ponds and streams may be as simple as the surroundings.

Fees for swimming and boating privileges in the country are usually modest. When you find public beaches and parks crowded, look to rural areas that have farm ponds and watershed lakes. But when using undeveloped sites, be sure to look out for the safety of children.





fishing

The best fishing often can be on private land or where access is under private control. Much choice fishing is available for a fee or as part of the privileges that go with a farm vacation or with the use of a picnic or camping area or other rural recreation facility.

Many farm ponds and small lakes are stocked, fertilized, and managed to produce superior sport fishing.

Farms and ranches that lie adjacent to public water—a lake or river—or have fishing streams running through them may offer access privileges for a fee. Patronage of most privately controlled fishing spots is regulated to avoid overcrowding.



A secluded farm pond in a quiet rural scene offers a rare opportunity to enjoy fishing in pleasant surroundings. You need not drive great distances to reach such fishing water.





hunting



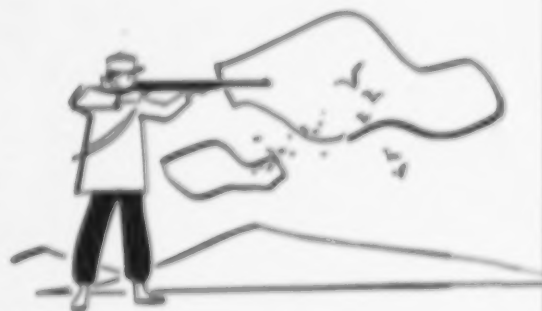
Stripcropped fields and rail fences, each in its own place, mean varied habitat for upland farm game. The best hunting available for many game species is on agricultural land where farmers use soil conservation practices and preserve wildlife cover.

Most farmland produces game of one kind or another. In fact, it is estimated that 80 percent of the hunting in the United States is on private land. Although wild game "belongs" to the State, the landowner controls access to the land and may charge for the privilege of hunting.

As more and more of you want to hunt, good shooting is more and more restricted to land where farmers and ranchers improve habitat and control hunting—aside from public hunting grounds. Most present-day sportsmen are willing to pay a reasonable fee for the privilege of hunting where game abounds. Local game officers usually will know of hunting cooperatives and private landowners who sell hunting privileges.

On many farms that have lots of waterfowl, farmers make a business of catering to hunters in season. Some make extensive improvements to control water levels and flood fields to make them attractive for ducks and geese.

A growing number of shooting preserves near large cities offer guaranteed shooting of pen-raised game for a fee, usually for longer seasons than are permitted for wild game. Shooting preserves usually advertise in the newspapers, sportsmen's magazines, and the classified telephone directory.





winter sports



Sleighing, tobogganing, ice skating, and ice fishing have been popular in rural America for generations.

Thanks to better transportation city people can now readily enjoy these sports too. Skiing, especially, has become a popular outdoor sport in recent years.

Many lodges and resort areas provide elaborate facilities for the enjoyment of snow sports. Vacation farms and western guest ranches offer opportunity for recreation on snow and ice under natural conditions.

Some northern farmers have cleared slopes for skiing and tobogganing. Some have little more than open slopes. Others have installed shelters, tows, and other equipment for their customers. Many of them offer overnight and eating accommodations.



Many farms and ranches adjoining national forests and parks in snow areas offer living accommodations and provide transportation to choice ski areas. In other places, private operators have installed ski lifts and other equipment under use permits on public land.

the
things
around
you



Much of the fascination of a vacation or weekend in the country is in studying the plants, animals, and other natural objects around you. Nature study, whether planned or incidental, can be an important part of your enjoyment of a stay on a vacation farm or of hiking, camping, picnicking, swimming, fishing, or hunting.

Children, especially, enjoy seeing farm animals and finding and exam-

ining the many kinds of lizards, frogs, crickets, butterflies, and other forms of animal life they find in the country. For those from the city each day brings a succession of marvelous "firsts" as they explore the world around them.

Bird watching is one of the most popular, and sometimes more formalized, nature study pursuits. Many vacation farms and ranches and other rural recreation areas are at-

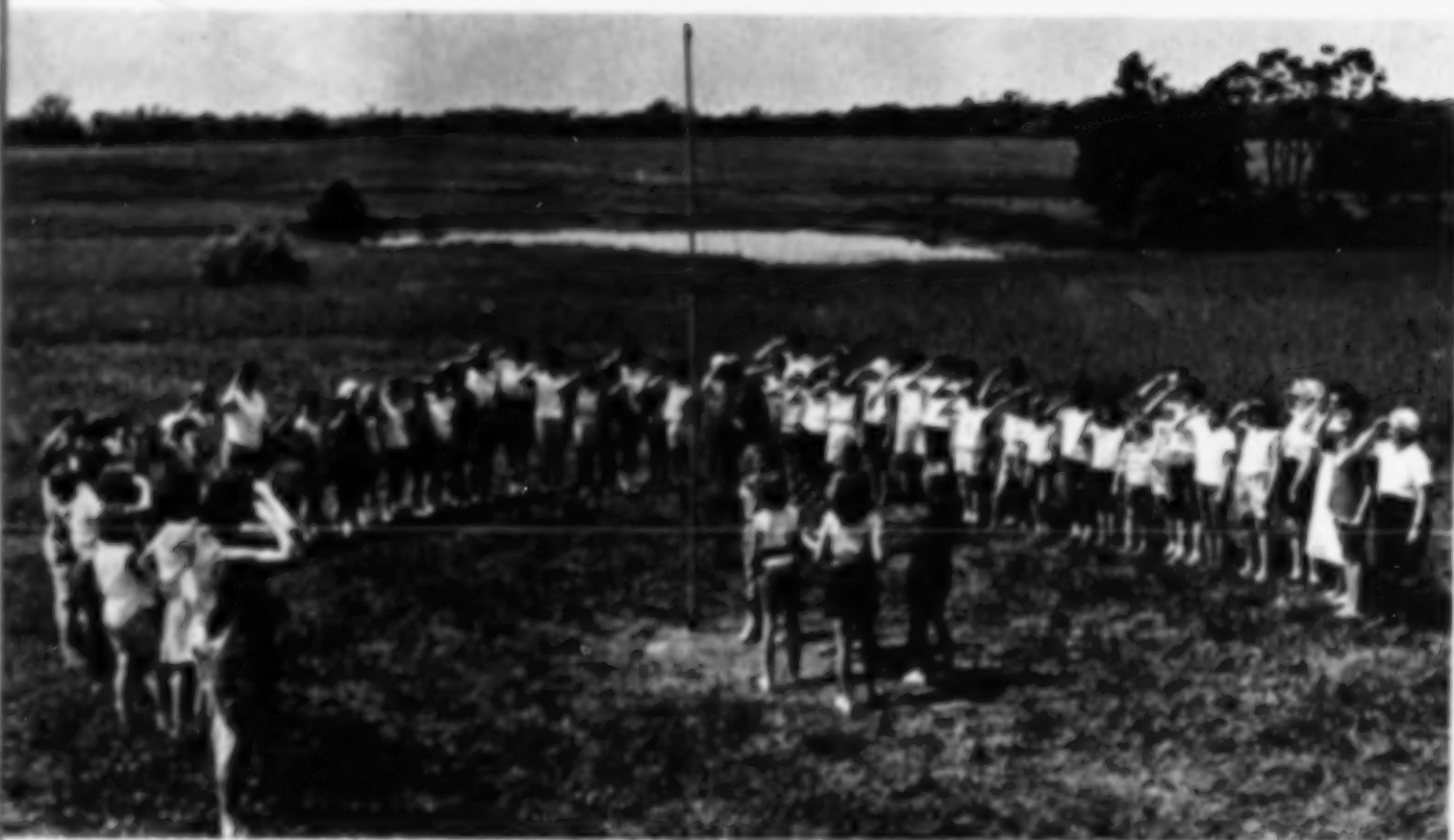


tractive habitats for birds.

Camps and outings in the country provide opportunity to teach young people about the natural world in which they live and man's interrelationship with it. Some school systems have outdoor classes in which pupils collect and identify leaves and other natural objects. Under the guidance of experts, they see soil, forests, and wildlife and learn the importance of conservation.



Community Projects



YOU AND YOUR neighbors can make new opportunities for outdoor recreation through community projects of many kinds.

The people of every community need recreation facilities, and the demand is growing steadily. Filling the need locally makes the community a more satisfying place to live. This, in turn, keeps young people in the community and attracts new industry that further

strengthens the local economy.

Almost any open land can be developed for some sort of outdoor recreation use. Community action, either through cooperative private enterprise or through Government agencies, can find ways to convert open rural land into improved recreation areas.

The next three pages point out some of the possibilities.



watershed projects

Small watershed projects enable urban and rural people to work together to make the best use of land and water resources for recreation and other purposes.

Under the Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Act, recreation can be one of the major purposes of a project. The Federal Government can bear up to half the cost of a reservoir or other development included for fish and wildlife or recreation. Whether built primarily for those purposes or not, pools formed behind dams provide a wide variety of fishing and other recreation.

Civic clubs and municipalities have developed many splendid camping areas, picnicking grounds, and other recreation facilities on the shores of watershed-project lakes.



group camps

Every community needs group camping facilities for its youth organizations, church and civic groups, and similar groups.

Some landowners have developed campgrounds and related facilities that are available to organized groups.

Where there are not enough private facilities, an organization or municipality can usually acquire access to a suitable tract of land and develop a campground at a modest cost.

Areas around new reservoirs are especially adaptable to such purposes.



rural-urban projects

Interspersed through the suburbs and in nearby rural areas around large cities are farmlands and open tracts of land that could easily be adapted to recreation use.

Cropland and pastures can be planted to grass



and converted to golf courses and sports areas. Or they can be planted to trees to provide shade for camping and picnicking. Ponds and small lakes can be built. Choice scenic and natural areas can be reserved for nature centers, parks, or bridle paths.

Public agencies, such as park authorities, agricultural colleges, the U.S. Soil Conservation Service, the U.S. Forest Service, and the Cooperative Extension Service can provide the technical advice and assistance needed to develop almost any kind of land that may be available for adapted recreation uses.

The surging demand for recreation facilities in urban fringe areas can be met through projects that unite urban and rural sponsoring organizations—such as a suburban unit of government and a soil conservation district—in cooperative planning and development.

Recent legislation enables the U.S. Department of Agriculture to give technical and credit assistance to such rural-urban projects to create new camping and picnicking facilities, riding and hiking trails, and such to improve and protect the scenic attractions of rural areas.

hunting areas

In some places adjacent landowners are offering for a fee, hunting privileges on their combined acreage.

In others, sportsmen have taken the initiative in making arrangements with groups of farmers to use their land for hunting. These arrangements often provide for the hunters to help with habitat improvement in the area. As a result they have superior hunting with regulated access.

Soil conservation districts and other local farmers' organizations provide good contacts for initiating cooperative hunting arrangements.

State wildlife agencies may be able to help with such projects.

what you can do

You can help increase the outdoor recreation facilities available to you and your neighbors by supporting and encouraging both private and public developments. Here are some of the ways you can help:

PATRONIZE farm and ranch recreation enterprises that give good service at reasonable prices. **EXPLORE** the countryside. Locate areas that could be developed for the kind of recreation you are interested in.

TALK to your neighbors. Interest them in the possibilities of supporting the kind of facilities you want in nearby rural areas.

ASK QUESTIONS about organizations that might sponsor a rural-urban recreation project. Canvass both urban or suburban and rural community activities. Likely prospects in cities and towns are civic clubs, churches, educational and welfare associations, sportsmen's clubs, conservation and naturalist societies; likely prospects in the country are soil conservation districts, watershed associations, and granges.

FIND OUT what assistance—financial and other—is available from public-service agencies of your municipal, county, State, and Federal Governments. Find out if any projects and programs are already underway or being planned. Your county agent or soil conservation district office can tell you about rural development projects.

PROPOSE to your local planning board or other municipal or county officials the kind of project you want.

ORGANIZE a citizens' committee or association to promote and sponsor your project if no existing organization seems willing to undertake it.

ATTEND MEETINGS and hearings and support your proposal.

WORK AT IT. Accept a post on a committee and help with the tasks that must be done to develop and carry out cooperative public action.

IT'S UP TO YOU. Our country has abundant natural resources to meet outdoor recreation needs. It's up to you as local citizens to see that they are put to good use.

how USDA can help

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has an interest in the land use problems of urban fringe and rural areas and a responsibility for conservation and development of natural resources. Many of the Nation's needs for outdoor recreation can be served by wise management of soil, water, plant, and animal resources on private land.

USDA through its local officials can help in many ways to develop outdoor recreation projects near population centers. Here are some of them:

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Provide information about soil, water, and other natural resources. Make special surveys to gather local facts about physical, economic, and social factors.

Advise and assist landowners, soil conservation districts, planning boards, and others in preparing plans for recreation and resource development.

Provide designs for needed recreation facilities and improvements. Give on-site technical assistance in locating recreation facilities, planting grass and trees, and the like.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Make loans to local sponsoring organizations for costs of watershed projects, rural-urban recreation projects, and rural electric cooperatives.

Make loans to landowners for soil, water, forestry, and wildlife conservation practices and to family farmers for purchase, construction, and operation of recreation facilities.

Share cost of construction and land treatment in watershed projects for flood prevention, water management, fish and wildlife development, and recreation facilities. Share cost of establishing soil and water, forestry, fish and wildlife, and recreation practices on farms and ranches.

EDUCATION

Assist the general public in understanding the role of outdoor recreation in resource development and arriving at sound public policy. Inform landowners and others of important considerations in determining the feasibility of recreation enterprises or community projects.

Provide counsel and training in the development and management of recreation resources and in methods of serving the public.

Publicize, through mass media, programs and methods to conserve and develop natural resources, including outdoor recreation benefits.

RESEARCH

Study basic principles and local economic, social, and legal factors that affect development of recreation enterprises and projects.

RURAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT

Participate in development of overall economic development programs designed to make full coordinated use of all the foregoing services in a designated area.

Serve in advisory or consulting capacity to Rural Areas Development organizations.



New opportunities for outdoor recreation are opening up all across rural America. They range from access to privately owned land for camping to ownership of a place of your own in the country.

Farmers and ranchers for a small fee are providing facilities for water sports, for winter sports, and for hunting, horseback riding, and the like.

Urban and rural people are working together to develop camping areas, picnic grounds, and facilities for water sports around small-watershed lakes.

Issued June 1963

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington 25, D.C.—Price 20 cents

★ U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1963 OF—679779